

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Listing of the Claims

1. **(Currently amended)** A method for diagnosing a disease characterized by non-physiological levels of hepcidin, comprising the steps of: (a) obtaining a tissue or fluid sample from a subject; (b) contacting the sample with an antibody or fragment thereof that specifically binds to one or more carboxy terminal epitopes contained within amino acids 70 to 84 of SEQ ID NO: 2[[,]]; and (c) quantifying hepcidin level in the sample; wherein:

the disease is selected from the group consisting of chronic renal insufficiency, renal anemia and hereditary hemochromatosis;

the tissue or fluid sample is selected from the group consisting of kidney samples, liver samples, and urine samples; and

the non-physiological level of hepcidin is indicative of the disease.

2-3. **(Cancelled)**

4. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 1, wherein the quantifying step (c) comprises conducting an assay selected from the group consisting of a radioimmunoassay, a sandwich assay, a precipitin reaction, a gel immunodiffusion assay, an agglutination assay, a fluorescent immunoassay, a protein A immunoassay and an immunoelectrophoresis assay.

5-14. **(Cancelled)**

15. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 1, wherein said hepcidin ~~comprises~~ is pro-hepcidin, hepcidin or fragments thereof.

16. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein said hepcidin comprises pro-hepcidin.

17-24. **(Cancelled)**

25. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 1, wherein the disease is chronic renal insufficiency[[.]] or hereditary hemochromatosis.
26. **(Previously presented)** The method of claim 1, wherein the disease is hereditary hemochromatosis.
27. **(Currently amended)** A method of detecting hepcidin comprising the steps of:
(a) obtaining a tissue or fluid sample from a subject; and (b) contacting the sample with an antibody or fragment thereof that specifically binds to one or more carboxy terminal epitopes contained within amino acids 70 to 84 of SEQ ID NO: 2; wherein the tissue or fluid sample is selected from the group consisting of a kidney sample, a liver sample, and a urine sample, and wherein the method of detecting hepcidin is selected from the group consisting of Western blot, immunodot, immunohistochemistry, and immunofluorescence.
28. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 27, wherein said hepcidin is hepcidin, prohepcidin or fragments thereof.
29. **(Cancelled)**
30. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim [[29]] 27, wherein said hepcidin is prohepcidin.